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ABSTRACT

In May 1995, Eastfield College, in Dallas, Texas, signed a formal affiliation with Service, Employment, and Redevelopment (SER)-Jobs for Progress, Inc., a Hispanic-oriented non-profit corporation dedicated to developing employment and training efforts. The agreement stipulates that SER will provide or manage the provision of training and technical assistance to Eastfield College. The partnership will work to procure funding to develop programs for implementation at the college and assist the college in establishing an Amigos de SER program. Current achievements as a result of the partnership include the following: (1) the Collegiate Alliance Agreement with the University of Puerto Rico Regional College to provide opportunities for cross-cultural student education, faculty and staff development, and non-credit and contract training; (2) the Eastfield College Community Leadership Council, established to create a supportive relationship between the college and organizations in the private and public sector; (3) resource development, focusing on the establishment of the Office of Institutional Advancement which serves as the official conduit for external fund development, expansion of institutional relations, and maintenance of alumni affairs; (4) the appointment of the college's President to the executive council of the National Amigos de SER; (5) new programs, including the Travel and Tourism Industry Program and distance learning programs; and (6) increased conference participation. (TGI)

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21st Century Partnerships:
Community Colleges and Employment and Training Nonprofits

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"21st Century Partnerships-Community Colleges and Employment and Training Nonprofits"

In May 1995, Eastfield College, a member institution within the Dallas County Community College District, signed a formal afffiliation with SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.'s national office. This public institution of higher education and one of the largest nonprofits in the United States are two longstanding achievers in the education, employment and training arenas, yet totally different by organizational design. Via the historic signing of their affiliation agreement, each one has helped to launch a strategy many other colleges and universities also are initiating to improve their capabilities in providing better and greater services to the community-at-large.

I. About the Partners

A. SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc., a non-profit corporation under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is the largest Hispanic service-oriented corporation in the United States. Formed as a joint effort in 1964 by the two oldest and largest U. S. Hispanic volunteer organizations, the American G I Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), SER is distinguished currently as one of the ten most promising learning systems in the nation (Barbara Bush Foundation). SER, which began actual operation in 1965, is a network of employment and training organizations that formulates and advocates initiatives that result in the increased development and utilization of America's human resources, with special emphasis on the needs of Hispanics, in the areas of education, training, employment, business and economic opportunity.

SER, which is the Spanish verb "to be," is also an acronym for Service, Employment, and Redevelopment. SER's National office is centrally located in Dallas, Texas for better access to its constituency of over 40 SER affiliate in 17 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. SER National, Inc. develops the employment and training capabilities of the SER network through the provision of training and technical assistance, research and planning, and program and policy development. The national office is the

collective technical and training arm that directs long-range planning and advocates with private and public sectors for the network.

The SER network is as diverse as it is large. Each affiliate is a fully operational community-based organization that provides programmatic services to those who are in need of targeted redevelopment or employment. Local SER affiliates are located in 17 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The affiliates of SER National are each autonomous and governed by their own local board of directors. The services provided by all affiliates and their respective satellites are varied and numerous, while always inclusive of SER's main services: the Family Learning Center curriculum, GED, ESL, SLIAG or citizenship training, immigration and vocational counseling, employment training, job placement, and at-risk educational alternatives.

SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc., is the largest and most *cost-effective* Hispanic employment and training non-profit corporation in the nation. Since its incorporation in 1964, SER has managed funds from the public and the private sectors achieving an excellent track record in the performance of services. In its 32 years of operation, SER has been privileged to receive support from the federal government, foundations and corporations.

B. Eastfield College, which opened in the Fall of 1970, the second of the seven colleges in the Dallas County Community College District, provides a high quality and affordable education to the community. The college has the distinction as a viable partner in the progress of the eastern region of Dallas County, including East Dallas, Garland, Mesquite, and surrounding areas. Sometimes known as the "Educational Village" because of its unique architecture, the College is located on 244 acres at the intersection of Interstate 30 and Motley Drive in Mesquite. The Eastfield campus rises impressively from the plains of eastern Dallas County. Functional building clusters give students easy access to classrooms and labs, and the overall aesthetic effect has earned Eastfield several architectural awards of excellence. In addition, the College boasts an outstanding Performance Hall which serves the community for a variety of fine arts events.

The Dallas County Community College District, which consists of Eastfield and six other colleges throughout Dallas County, enrolls approximately 50,000 credit and 45,000 non-credit students per semester and employs over 2,000 full-time faculty and staff members. The growth of the District into an educational system began in 1965 when voters created the Dallas County Junior College District and approved a $41.5 million bond issue to finance it. The next year the District's first college, El Centro, began operation in downtown Dallas. Eastfield College and Mountain View College enrolled their first students five years later and the plans for a multi-campus district became a reality.

The mission of Eastfield College is to provide educational opportunities through high quality instruction, services and programs in an environment conducive to student success within academic, technical, occupational, and continuing education. Our purpose is to develop responsible citizenship, to value diversity and cultural enrichment, and to be accountable and adaptable in our changing world. Since Eastfield opened its doors twenty-five years ago, it has continually endeavored to meet the educational and cultural needs of students and the community by providing the finest in educational services. The college has grown from an initial enrollment of 3500 students in 1970 to over 14,000 in 1995. In addition, approximately 10,000 students have received AA degrees, certificates, or transfer status since Eastfield opened its doors. Although the current student body includes students of all ages, the average age is 29 years old. Approximately 35 percent of the credit student body is enrolled in technical/occupational programs, with the remaining 65 percent planning to transfer to a senior college or university or simply taking courses for personal or career enrichment. In the Fall of 1995, minority students made up 33.3% of the total enrollment with the following breakout: Caucasian 66.7%, Hispanic 13.3%, African-American, 8.9% and other ethnicities 11.1%. Eastfield College currently employs 94 full-time faculty with approximately 350 adjunct faculty.

Eastfield College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the Associate of Arts and Sciences Degree and the Associate of Applied Science Degree. The college offers a broad range of academic study. Academic transfer courses are offered

in: (1.) art, music, dance, theater, and journalism; (2.) physical science, geography; geology, history; (3.) sociology, philosophy, psychology; (4.) computer science, mathematics, engineering; (5.) English, French, German, Spanish; and, (6.) business, marketing and management. The College also offers associate degrees and certificates in technical educational programs designed to equip students to immediately enter rewarding careers in business and industry. In addition, thousands each semester find growth opportunities through the extensive Continuing Education course offerings.

Eastfield is recognized and sanctioned by the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System and the Texas Education Agency, and is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity institution. Its institutional memberships include: the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Southern Association of Junior Colleges, the Association of Texas Colleges and Universities, and a charter membership in the League for Innovation in the Community College. The League was founded in 1968 and is an educational consortium that functions specifically to stimulate innovation and experimentation in higher education.

II. The Affiliation Agreement

The affiliation agreement between the national office of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. and Eastfield College became a reality on August 31, 1995, with the signatures of both Presidents, Pedro Louis Viera and Dr. Robert Aguero, respectively, along with Dr. J. William Wenrich, Chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District and John Alarid, Chairman of the National Board of Directors for SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. The key areas of the agreement for the essence of the affiliation address the provision of training and technical assistance by SER to its network of affiliates. As a national SER affiliate, Eastfield College, is now entitled to the expertise and services that may be offered by the national office or other affiliates from across the United States. The agreement stipulates that SER National will provide, or manage the provision of training and technical assistance to Eastfield College to the extent that funds are available for that purpose. And SER National, in conjunction with Eastfield, will work to procure funding to be used to: 1. develop programmatic initiatives for implementation at the college; and 2. assist Eastfield in the establishment of an Amigos de SER

program. Affiliation with the SER national office also will allow Eastfield active participation from the network in nationwide projects. And for Eastfield to remain current in the employment and training activities, SER will regulary develop and distribute research and policy materials that are pertinent to effective programming, as well as provide guidance and assistance in Eastfield's own research activities in workforce education and workforce development.

III. Current Achievements as a Result of the SER/Eastfield Affiliation

A. The Collegiate Alliance Agreement
University of Puerto Rico Regional College and Eastfield College

Even before the SER/Eastfield College affiliation agreement had been signed, the two already were working to launch one of the most important concepts ever for the college. Realizing that a highly impactful direction for faculty and students is to offer them the opportunity to learn and grow from the interaction with others, Eastfield began the groundwork for a partnership with the administrative division of the University of Puerto Rico.

The University of Puerto Rico is a state system of higher education on the U. S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the smallest sland of the Greater Antilles. The island, 118 miles long and 35 miles wide, is one of the most densely populated areas of the world with a population of approximately 950 persons per square mile and a total population of 3.6 million American citizens. According to the U. S. Census in 1990, about 2/3 of the island's households have an annual income of less thatn $14,999, in constrast to 15.4% of households in the mainland. Over 60% of the population receive federal assistance.

The University of Puerto Rico System contains an Administration of Regional Colleges, that supervises six community colleges within this state system. The initial visit was coordinated during the time of the SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. National Conference that was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The delegation from Eastfield College met with representatives from the regional (community) colleges division, toured a community college, and gave a formal presentation to the entire UPR administration. This Collegiate

Alliance Agreement seeks the exchange of reciprocal opportunities for institutional advancement for the regional community colleges of the University of Puerto Rico system and Eastfield College. The joint partnership, with its sole purpose to enhance educational and professional development, will focus on: advances in cross-cultural student education; staff, faculty, and administrators' development; programmatic initiatives; distance learning; and non-credit and contract training. In September 1995, a delegation from the University of Puerto Rico visited Eastfield College. During those activities, SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. presented the affiliation agreement to Eastfield during the program for the UPR team. The Collegiate Alliance Agreement has gone to the President and Chancellor of the UPR system for final signing. Eastfield is currently investigating funding for the alliance from the government of Puerto Rico.

B. The Eastfield College Community Leadership Council

At the beginning of establishing the office of institutional advancement and organizing the private giving program for Eastfield, it became clear that the college would need a formal executive body to guide the base of its non-public fund development. A body similar to the design of SER's local Amigos de SER was begun. The Amigos de SER is a group of corporate representatives who provide financial support the various initiatives in the SER network. With the assistance of the division of corporate relations at the national office of SER, Eastfield was successful in launching the Eastfield College Community Leadership Council that mirrors the design of the Amigos de SER. The purpose of the Leadership Council is to create and maintain a harmonious and supportive relationship between Eastfield College and the private and public sector for the actualization of the College's mission and goals.

National and local corporations currently represented on the Leadership Council include: Allstate Insurance, The Coca-Cola Company, Coors Brewing Company, First Interstate Bank, Hagerty Enterprises, IBM Corporation, Intercontinental Manufacturing--IMCO, Kroger Foods, Lone Star Gas Company, Merrill Lynch Credit Corporation, NationsBank, Outback Steak Hous, Southwest Airlines, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Tenneco

Europe Limited, Univision Television Group, United Parcel Service, and Harte-Hanks Publishers. The Leadership Council had its first inaugural meeting October 1995, has since selected key officers, and established it agenda for the the next three years. Under the Eastfield in the 21st Century Initiative, this executive body will guide the development of their own campaign "Eastfield Tomorrow" to promote for the campus these four areas: curriculum improvement, student financial support, faculty and staff development, and innovations in technology for the disciplines.

C. Resource Development

Eastfield College by directive of the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities established on October 5, 1994 an Office of Institutional Advancement. The Office of Institutional Advancement is one of the mainlines of the College, serving as the official conduit for external fund development, expansion of institutional relations, maintenance of alumni affairs, and broad-based, institutional communications. This new component of the College's administration was placed under the auspices of the Finance and Planning Division. In 1994, the total realm of functions that an office of institutional advancement demands had not been determined for it to meet various performance requirements. For the area to maintain adequate operations, it needed immediate access to information in resource development to launch, at minimum, certain functions to place the Eastfield campus in line with the other community colleges in the District that have fully-operational resource development components.

When the office began at the Eastfield campus, the most important necessity was access to a daily review of various on-line resource development sources, and federal, state and local publications. The training and technical assistance staff at the national office of SER became the "quasi" support staff of Eastfield's institutional advancement office, providing use of all national electronic systems, access to the its fund development references, publications, and newsletters, use of its proposals archives, and expertise on establishing a corporate giving program. The individual hired to transform the institutional advancement office from skeleton form relied on this team to support many functions the office required. This extension from the SER

national office proved invaluable until funds could be established to begin purchasing much of the necessary material.

SER National continues to be a mainstay in facilitating numerous requests at the national, state and local levels involving comprehensive research for proposal development, linkages with corporations and agencies, and current trends in workforce development. All assistance to Eastfield College is reported to the United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Division via SER's quarterly report for its training and technical assistance grant. SER is one of 14 nonprofits recognized as a stakeholder with the US Department of Labor.

D. Senior Executive Council Representation

For the first time, in the 23 year history of the National Amigos de SER, has a non-corporate entity held a representative post. In the Spring 1995, Dr. Robert Aguero, President of Eastfield College, was appointed to the executive body of the National Amigos de SER, which is called the Senior Executive Council. The National Amigos de SER has a over 160 corporate members, all of which have contributed a minimum of $3,000 towards the initiatives of the SER network. Eastfield College joined the Senior Executive Council in compliment, without the requirement of a contribution. The SEC meets twice annually to discuss strategies for literacy, employment and training goals.

E. New Programs

SER has been, and remains instrumental, in the development of new programs for the Eastfield College campus. An area of interest for Eastfield College has been the Travel and Tourism Industry Program, and an area of interest for SER has been the use of distance learning for the advancement of the entire network. Both are in the preliminary stages of development. The SER Learning Network was funded by IBM Corporation to launch a distance learning project in Mexico, Latin America, and Puerto Rico in conjunction with the National Electronic University, Eastfield College, other community colleges, corporations and UNESCO. The grant was for $175,000 to create new instructional materials and distance learning opportunities over the worldwide network.

F. Conference Participation

Eastfield College, along with other 2 yr. and 4yr. higher education institutions, became a participant by giving a block of workshop sessions on intergenerationalism, literacy and bilingual education at the 31st Annual National Conference and Job Fair of of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. held in Dallas, Texas during 1996. Four professors from Eastfield College's social science and humanities divisions presented the aforementioned topics to conference attendees, primarily composed of network affiliate executives and employees.

IV. Summary

Innovations in all of the areas previously discussed continue to occur with through this unusual partnership for workforce education and workforce development. Eastfield College has been catapulted from the role of community college within the largest junior college system in Texas to that of a national figure among nonprofits, foundations and leading Fortune 500 companies--all in less than one year and half. The two entities dedicated to change continue to process their partnership within a highly demanding educational and social environment that challenges each to address the needs of the communities nationwide. ****

A. Mae Britt joined the administration of Eastfield College in October 1994 after a progressive career in higher education and nonprofit management. As Director of Institutional Advancement, she is the chief development officer for the institution with the management responsibilities for fund raising, program development, institutional relations, and alumni affairs for the college. Before joining Eastfield, Ms. Britt was manager of research and program development at the national office of SER. Special highlights during her nonprofit career were: designing a government affairs office for the network, which opened 1993 in Washington, D.C.; soliciting funds for the nationwide establishment of more than forty Family Learning Centers; maintaining participation in the Combined Federal Campaign; and the 1994 nationwide implementation of her program design for RecruitAmerica Centers--one stop career centers to support federal reinvestment in America's workforce currently funded by the U. S. Department of Labor. Her nonprofit career followed thirteen rewarding years in higher education as an assistant and associate professor. Noteworthy work was in the Southern University system, the Lousiana State University system, and the University of Texas system. During her associate professorship at Wiley College, Ms. Britt was nominated by the college president for a United Negro College Fund Fellowship. She was accepted as a fellow and earned a Certificate of Study in British Literature, Government and History from Exeter College, one of forty colleges in the University of Oxford system located within the city of Oxford, England. Ms. Britt's educational background includes degree study at: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, B.S. (4 yr. Presidential Scholar, Alpha Chi Honor Society, and Summa Cum Laude); California State University-Sacramento, M.A.; and the University of Southwestern Louisiana, (Ph.D. study completing all coursework).

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